

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for accessing information related to a product stored in a main computer from a remote computer, the method comprising the steps of:
- storing product data related to a plurality of products in a memory of the main computer;
- storing product data related to at least one of the products in a memory of the remote computer;
- selecting one of the products at the remote computer;
- generating a data request query related to the selected product at the remote computer;
- automatically establishing a data link between the remote computer and the main computer after generating the data request query;
- transmitting the data request query from the remote computer to the main computer;
- selecting updated product data at the main computer in response to the data request query;
- transmitting the updated product data from the main computer to the remote computer; and
- automatically terminating the data link between the remote computer and the main computer after transmitting the updated product data from the main computer to the remote computer.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the data request query related to the selected product at the remote computer is a SQL statement.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting a map from the main computer to the remote computer along with the updated product data to instruct the remote computer in the integration of the updated product data and the product data stored in the memory of the remote computer.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the data request query is generated automatically upon selecting one of the products at the remote computer.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of replacing portions of the product data stored on the remote computer with updated product data transmitted from the main computer.

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6. The method of claim 1, wherein the product data includes graphical and textual data.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of transmitting display information from the main computer to the remote computer, the display information indicating a format of the textual data and a display location of the graphical data relative to the textual data.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of transmitting updated graphical data from the main computer to the remote computer if the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer is different from the graphical data stored in the memory of the main computer.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of integrating graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer with the textual data received from the main computer using the display information received from the main computer to format the graphical data and the textual data to generate the product information data related to the product.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of selecting updated product data at the main computer in response to the data request query comprises the steps of:

comparing a revision level of the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer to a revision level of the graphical data stored in the memory of the main computer; and

selecting the graphical data stored in the memory of the main computer with a different revision level than the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer to determine the updated graphical data.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of replacing portions of the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer with the updated graphical data transmitted from the main computer.

12. The method of claim 3, wherein the product data includes graphical and textual data.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of selecting updated product data at the main computer in response to the data request query comprises the steps of:

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comparing a revision level of the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer to a revision level of the graphical data stored in the memory of the main computer; and

5 selecting the graphical data stored in the memory of the main computer with a different revision level than the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer to determine updated graphical data.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of replacing portions of the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer with the updated graphical data transmitted from the main computer.

10 15. The method of claim 1, wherein the product data includes constant data and variable data.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein step of selecting updated product data at the main computer in response to the data request query comprises the steps of:

15 comparing a revision level of the constant data stored in the memory of the remote computer to a revision level of the constant data stored in the memory of the main computer; and

selecting the constant data stored in the memory of the main computer with a different revision level than the constant data stored in the memory of the remote computer to determine updated constant data.

20 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of replacing portions of the constant data stored in the memory of the remote computer with the portions of the updated constant data transmitted from the main computer.

25 18. A apparatus for accessing information related to a product selected by a user, the device comprising:

a remote computer having a memory configured to store product data for a product, the remote computer configured to generate a data request query for the product upon selection by a user, the remote computer further configured to establish a data link between the remote computer and a main computer after the data request query has been generated, and the remote computer further configured to terminate the data link with the main computer after receiving the updated product data from the main computer;

09618744-071800

the main computer having a memory configured to store product data related to a plurality of products, the main computer configured to receive the data request query from the remote computer and select updated product data for the selected product; and

5 communication hardware coupling the remote computer to the main computer, the communication hardware configured to transmit the data request query from the remote computer to the main computer and transmit the updated product data from the main computer to the remote computer

10 19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the main computer is further configured to provide a map along with the updated product data to instruct the remote computer in the integration of updated product data and the product data stored in the memory of the remote computer.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the product data includes graphical and textual data.

15 21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the remote computer is configured to replace portions of the graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer with the graphical data transmitted from the main computer.

20 22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the remote computer is further configured to receive display information from the main computer to format the display of the textual data and the display location of the graphical data relative to the textual data.

25 23. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the remote computer is further configured to integrate graphical data stored in the memory of the remote computer with the textual data received from the main computer using the display information received from the main computer to format the graphical data and the textual data to generate the product information data related to the product.

30 24. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the product data includes constant data and variable data.

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